

## E-discussion: Addressing ongoing and emerging challenges for meeting the MDGs in 2015 and for sustaining development gains in the future

## Summary report for part I (3 - 16 February 2014)



This word art is a recreation based on a word cloud generated from the answers of this part of the e-discussion.

## Introduction/background

This first part of the e-discussion addressed the role of strong institutions in enabling development at the national level; the importance of stable and enduring policy frameworks and an environment that facilitates sound policy-making, and; the importance of a stable social and political environment for development that takes into account peace, security and good governance, the rule of law and a rights-based approach to development.

In the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), this Part I examined the distinct changes in policy, legislation or institutional arrangements that have been significant in helping to propel them forward. It also addressed the need to pinpoint the steps that are necessary to accelerate the achievement of the MDGs, including through the MDG Acceleration Framework (MAF), especially for the lagging goals and regions. The importance of strong regional and global support arrangements were emphasized, particularly through enhanced global partnerships for the implementation of the MDGs, accelerating progress and sustaining development gains.

In the overall context of the Global Partnership for Development, the role of multi-stakeholder partnerships, as well as coordination arrangements adopted by government agencies, donor partners, civil society and the private sector for better coherence and impact was also discussed. This included the current challenges related to effective aid, trade and technology transfer, examined both in the context of MDG acceleration and of steps that will need to be taken for sustaining development gains in future.

## Guiding questions

Considering the above, the following three questions guided this I phase of the e-discussion:

- How can the role and importance of strong, stable and enduring institutions, policy frameworks and an environment that facilitates sound policy-making be assessed? How can these be fostered, strengthened and supported?
- What are the changes in policy, legislation and institutional frameworks, or concrete interventions that have accelerated progress in the MDGs? What are some of the specific interventions?
- On the basis of lessons learned in the efforts to build a global partnership for development, what are the fundamental obstacles to effective aid, trade, technology transfer, and other components of an enabling international environment? What factors need to be addressed to develop a renewed and more effective global partnership for development?

## Discussion Points

The following discussion summarizes views expressed by participants. They do not represent the views of the moderators or their institutions.

### *Role of strong institutions*

The contributors to the discussion agreed on the important role of strong institutions, policy frameworks, and environments on sound policy-making. Several examples where **institutions enabled policy frameworks**, such as Ukraine's government programmes focusing on HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention, and setting targets to tackle the spread of HIV/AIDS such as a 50 percent decrease in the number of new infections among members of most-at-risk groups; the eradication of mother-to-child HIV transmission; and access for all members of most-at-risk groups to HIV prevention programmes in Ukraine all contributed to new HIV cases being reduced in 2012 by 1.7 percent from 2011. Conversely, some examples where weak environments caused frameworks to not achieve their goals – such as Ukraine and their example of failing to meet inclusive education goals due to lack of political will – show that strong institutional support alone may not be enough to enact the effective implementation of positive MDG related outcomes.

Contributors provided several recommendations about fostering, strengthening and supporting an environment where sound policy-making can be assessed. Several examples of policy changes are given, - **modernizing state strategic planning systems**, and enhancing the quality of programmatic documents – which highlight a need to focus on the institutional capacities of Development and Planning Ministries, and the quality of information that informs their policy recommendations. One commenter stated that the education of stakeholders on sound policy-making for MDG achievement is key to having a strong

environment where frameworks can be adequately evaluated. This could aid in providing the appropriate environment in which multiple stakeholders are informed and engaged with institutions in policy-making and assessment.

### *Policies for accelerating progress*

Several commenters referred to specific policy and legislative changes that accelerated progress on MDGs. In Uruguay, an effective legislation change as well as a programme to implement a policy framework to treat abortion as a health concern prompted improved access to safe and legal abortion services, which reduced maternal mortality from unsafe abortions precipitously. Another contributor pointed to **focusing on inequalities in achievement** through an MDG target – such as access to drinking water – by addressing access through a human rights component.

Another contributor remarked on their experiences with legislative and institutional frameworks that guided the **incorporation of the MDGs into national policy**. These adaptations were implemented on national and sub-national levels by producing national targets and indicators, and inserting them into key strategic documents. This increased effectiveness of the monitoring process on nationally set MDGs as part of a countrywide development-monitoring framework.

Other contributors called for policy change at a global level, and focused on the next set of goals as the appropriate forum for addressing these changes – such as an SDG goal for logistics, or an exclusive SDG goal on water – to **focus on emerging issues**, and provide more focus on issues that may not be achieved by 2015.

### *Global partnership for development*

Concerning the global partnership for development, the discussion focused on lessons learned and **fundamental obstacles to an effective environment**. A common contribution was that many of the commitments made during the formulation of the MDGs did not get appropriate follow-through. One commenter expressed that after the economic crisis of 2007, austerity policies in developed countries effected the global partnership negatively right as developing countries needed to re-double efforts for MDG achievement. Another commenter remarked on bi-lateral funding strategies not meeting goals to achieve educational MDG targets in West Africa, and that CSR and private sector funding should be proportional to private investments when considering the future of the global partnership.

Some commenters see the future post-2015 agenda as a way to **renew previous commitments** made in MDG 8 goals and targets, and possibly focus on the emerging agendas of investment, labor mobility, and migration while re-addressing vulnerabilities of the developing countries in recent context.

## **Key policy recommendations**

1. **Enhancing institutional capacities for policy-making:** Institutions play a strong role in championing or challenging MDG achievement through policy, and certain recommendations for strengthening institutions such as national governmental development and planning ministries can be improved by modernizing the state strategic planning and forecasting system and

enhancing the quality of the programmatic documents used for policy. As the tools used by institutions for sound policy-making improve, the incorporation of MDGs targets and indicators into the key government strategic planning documents on national and sub-national levels will enhance MDG achievement as well as increasing effectiveness of the monitoring process of nationally set MDGs as a part of national development monitoring will strengthen the environment where these policies can be assessed. By empowering local stakeholders through education on sound policy-making in terms of achieving the MDGs, an environment of accountability and local participation can emerge. Awareness raising and development efforts should be directed at demanding integrated planning guidelines for different levels of administration in institutions, not just national and international institutions.

2. **Positive MDG outcomes often require more than strong institutions alone:** The challenge related to achieving an environment for sound policy-making requires more than just strong institutions, political will needs to be engendered even when the national institutions are engaged in an issue that has MDG implications. Despite policy changes such as changed legal frameworks that can overcome obstacle to MDG achievement, other gaps may still remain that hinder acceleration in the MDG target. MDGs can become the “driver of improvements” by focusing changes in approach to strategic planning and setting national development goals, and can influence national and sub-national institutions, civil society organizations, and the population at large.
3. **The Global Partnership underwent challenges, but remains essential to enabling success of the MDGs:** Keeping the principles laid out in the Monterrey Consensus, which recognized the centrality of addressing systemic issues to ensure coherence and consistency across the international, monetary, financial and trading systems in support of economic situation, countries should continue to honor all commitments to achieve development. Despite setbacks concerning funding and global policy of austerity, the international community commits to a global partnership for development, it means it and directs its resources to where they are most needed.” The global partnership is essential to enabling an international environment for effective aid, trade, and technology transfer.
4. **A renewed Global Partnership should reinforce the inclusion of emerging issues:** Over the past 14 years since the Millennium Declaration, many national development agendas have adopted the MDG goals and targets into their development plans. Developing countries implemented such national MDG agenda focusing on national-level issues. The renewed global partnership should allow countries an opportunity to re-double efforts to achieve unfinished business of the national MDG agenda, while focusing on these emerging issues such as investments, migration and labor mobility, IPRs and technology transfers, and new and emerging forms of development cooperation facing developing countries.

## Contributions received with thanks from:

### *Moderators*

- John-Mary Kauzya, Chief, Governance and Public Administration Branch, Division for Public Administration and Development Management, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)
- Selim Jahan, Director Poverty Practice, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

### *Contributors*

- Action Canada for Population and Development
- Business Innovation Research Development
- Carol Bangura, Volunteer Chief Development Officer, Schools Without Borders, Inc.
- Cary Lee Peterson, NGO Representative for United Nations, New York - at C4CCES
- Development Generation - Africa International
- Dr. Reza Pouyafar (Niazi) Political Economist, Iran
- Hydroaid - Water for Development Management Institute
- International Federation of Freight Forwarders Association (FIATA)
- Luciana Mermet, Trade and Poverty, UNDP – Bureau of Development Policy – Poverty Group – New York
- Maria del Valle Rodriguez, PhD student, Venezuela
- Natalia Sitnikova, UNDP Project Manager, “Acceleration of MDGs progress in Ukraine” Project
- Adeline Gonay, UNDP Programme Advisor
- Raissa Muhutdinova - Global Civil Initiatives, Inc.
- Ramon Certeza, Trade Unionist, The Philippines
- Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI)

### *Facilitators*

- Channa Leng, UN DESA, New York, USA
- Orria Goni, UNDP, New York, USA